

Review Article

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## CONCEPTUAL REVIEW OF *AGNIKARMA* AND *KATI BASTI* IN *GRIDHRASI* W.S.R TO SCIATICA

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### Abstract

**Introduction:** *Gridhrasi* is an important *Vata Nanatmaja Vikara* characterized by radiating pain from *Sphik* to *Pada*. It closely resembles sciatica, where pain travels along the sciatic nerve. *Agnikarma* and *Kati Basti* are useful procedures for pain, stiffness, and restricted movement in *Gridhrasi*. **Materials and Methods:** This review was prepared from classical *Ayurvedic* texts like *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, *Ashtanga Hridaya*, and modern literature related to sciatica, low back pain, *Agnikarma*, and *Kati Basti*. **Observation:** *Agnikarma* is more useful in localized, severe, and pain-dominant conditions due to its *Ushna Guna*. *Kati Basti* is more useful in chronic, stiffness-dominant, and degenerative conditions due to the combined effect of *Snehana* and *Swedana*. **Conclusion:** *Gridhrasi* can be correlated with sciatica. *Agnikarma* gives quicker pain relief, while *Kati Basti* provides gradual and sustained relief in stiffness and chronic low back conditions.

**Keywords:** *Gridhrasi*, Sciatica, *Agnikarma*, *Kati Basti*, *Vata Vyadhi*, Low Back Pain

## Introduction

*Ayurveda* explains health as a balanced state of *Dosha*, *Dhatu*, *Mala*, *Agni*, and proper functioning of body and mind. Among the three *Dosha*, *Vata Dosha* plays a major role in all movements, nerve conduction, pain perception, and musculoskeletal activity. When *Vata* becomes aggravated due to improper diet, excessive physical strain, trauma, suppression of natural urges, irregular lifestyle, or degenerative changes,<sup>1</sup> it produces different painful disorders known as *Vata Vyadhi*. *Gridhrasi* is one such disease, described under *Vata Nanatmaja Vikara*, where the patient experiences radiating pain and difficulty in walking.<sup>2</sup>

The term *Gridhrasi* is derived from the gait of the patient, which resembles the walking pattern of a vulture due to pain, stiffness, and restricted lower limb movement. Classical symptoms include *Ruka* pain, *Toda* pricking sensation, *Stambha* stiffness, *Spandana* twitching, and pain radiating from *Sphik* to *Pada*. In *Vata Kaphaja Gridhrasi*,<sup>3</sup> additional symptoms like heaviness, drowsiness, and reduced appetite may be present. The clinical features of *Gridhrasi* can be correlated with sciatica, where pain travels along the distribution of the sciatic nerve, usually from the lower back to buttock, posterior thigh, leg, and foot.

Modern management of sciatica commonly includes analgesics, muscle relaxants, physiotherapy, epidural injections, and sometimes surgery. However, long-term use of painkillers may produce adverse effects and does not always correct the underlying functional disturbance. In this context, *Ayurvedic* procedures like *Agnikarma* and *Kati Basti* are important because both are localized, practical, and useful in pain-dominant conditions. *Agnikarma* is mainly indicated in painful disorders where quick pain relief is needed, while *Kati Basti* provides sustained local oleation and sudation effect over the lumbar region.<sup>4</sup>

## Aim and Objectives

### Aim

To review and compare the role of *Agnikarma* and *Kati Basti* in the management of *Gridhrasi* with special reference to sciatica.

### Objectives

- To study the classical concept of *Gridhrasi* according to *Ayurvedic* texts.

- To understand the modern concept of sciatica and its clinical correlation with *Gridhrasi*.
- To evaluate the probable mode of action of *Agnikarma* in *Gridhrasi*.
- To evaluate the probable mode of action of *Kati Basti* in *Gridhrasi*.
- To compare both procedures on the basis of pain relief, stiffness reduction, functional improvement, and practical applicability.

## Material and Methods

This is a plain review article based on classical *Ayurvedic* texts and available modern literature related to *Gridhrasi*, sciatica, *Agnikarma*, and *Kati Basti*. Classical references were collected from *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, *Ashtanga Hridaya*, and other relevant *Ayurvedic* texts. Modern information was reviewed from anatomy, physiology, orthopaedics, and neurology books related to sciatic nerve, low back pain, radiculopathy, and sciatica. The collected material was analyzed conceptually to understand the disease pathology, clinical features, and comparative therapeutic role of *Agnikarma* and *Kati Basti*.

## Conceptual Study

### *Gridhrasi*<sup>5</sup>

*Gridhrasi* is described under *Vata Vyadhi* and is considered one of the painful disorders caused mainly by aggravated *Vata Dosha*. The word *Gridhrasi* indicates a disease in which the patient walks with difficulty, similar to the gait of a vulture. The disease begins from *Sphik* region and radiates towards *Kati*, *Pristha*, *Uru*, *Janu*, *Jangha*, and *Pada*. This radiating pattern is the most important feature of *Gridhrasi*.

### Types of *Gridhrasi*

Classically, *Gridhrasi* is mainly described as:

- *Vataja Gridhrasi*<sup>6</sup>
- *Vata Kaphaja Gridhrasi*<sup>7</sup>

In *Vataja Gridhrasi*, symptoms like pain, pricking sensation, stiffness, twitching, and difficulty in movement are prominent. In *Vata Kaphaja Gridhrasi*, symptoms of *Kapha* such as heaviness, drowsiness, stiffness, loss of appetite, and sluggishness may also be seen.

### **Nidana of *Gridhrasi***

The important causative factors include excessive walking, excessive exercise, heavy weight lifting, trauma, improper posture, prolonged sitting, irregular food habits, intake of dry and cold food, suppression of natural urges, and age-related degeneration. These factors mainly aggravate *Vata Dosha* and produce pain-dominant disorders.

### **Lakshana of *Gridhrasi*<sup>8</sup>**

The main symptoms of *Gridhrasi* are:

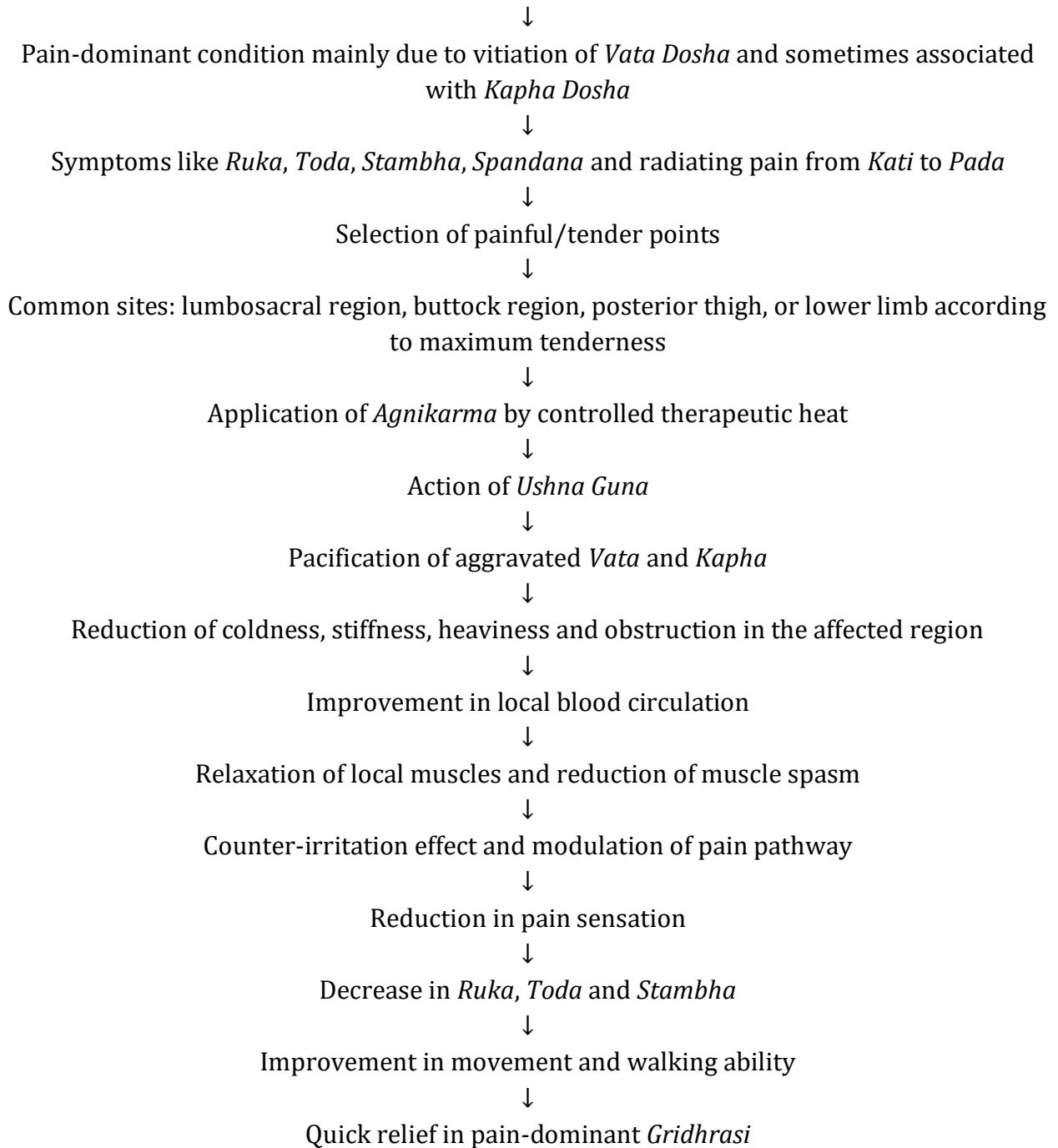
- *Ruka* means pain
- *Toda* means pricking or shooting pain
- *Stambha* means stiffness
- *Spandana* means twitching sensation
- Pain radiating from *Sphik* to *Pada*
- Difficulty in walking
- Restricted lower limb movement
- Heaviness in *Vata Kaphaja Gridhrasi*
- Reduced appetite and laziness in *Vata Kaphaja* condition

### **Role of *Agnikarma*<sup>9</sup>**

*Agnikarma* is one of the important para-surgical procedures described by *Acharya Sushruta*. It is specially indicated in diseases where pain is dominant and where *Vata* and *Kapha* are involved. In *Gridhrasi*, *Agnikarma* may be performed over selected painful points, commonly in the lumbosacral, buttock, or lower limb region according to the site of maximum tenderness. The therapeutic heat helps in reducing pain, stiffness, and local muscular spasm. The probable action of *Agnikarma* can be understood through *Ushna Guna*, which pacifies aggravated *Vata* and *Kapha*. Heat improves local blood circulation, reduces pain sensation, relaxes muscles, and may stimulate local tissue healing. It may also act through counter-irritation and modulation of pain pathways. Therefore, *Agnikarma* can provide quick relief in pain-dominant *Gridhrasi*.

### Flow Chart -1

#### *Gridhrasi*



#### **Role of *Kati Basti*<sup>10</sup>**

*Kati Basti* is a localized external therapy used for lower back disorders. In this procedure, warm medicated oil is retained over the *Kati Pradesh* for a specific time by making a boundary with dough. It combines the effects of *Snehana* and *Swedana*. The warm oil

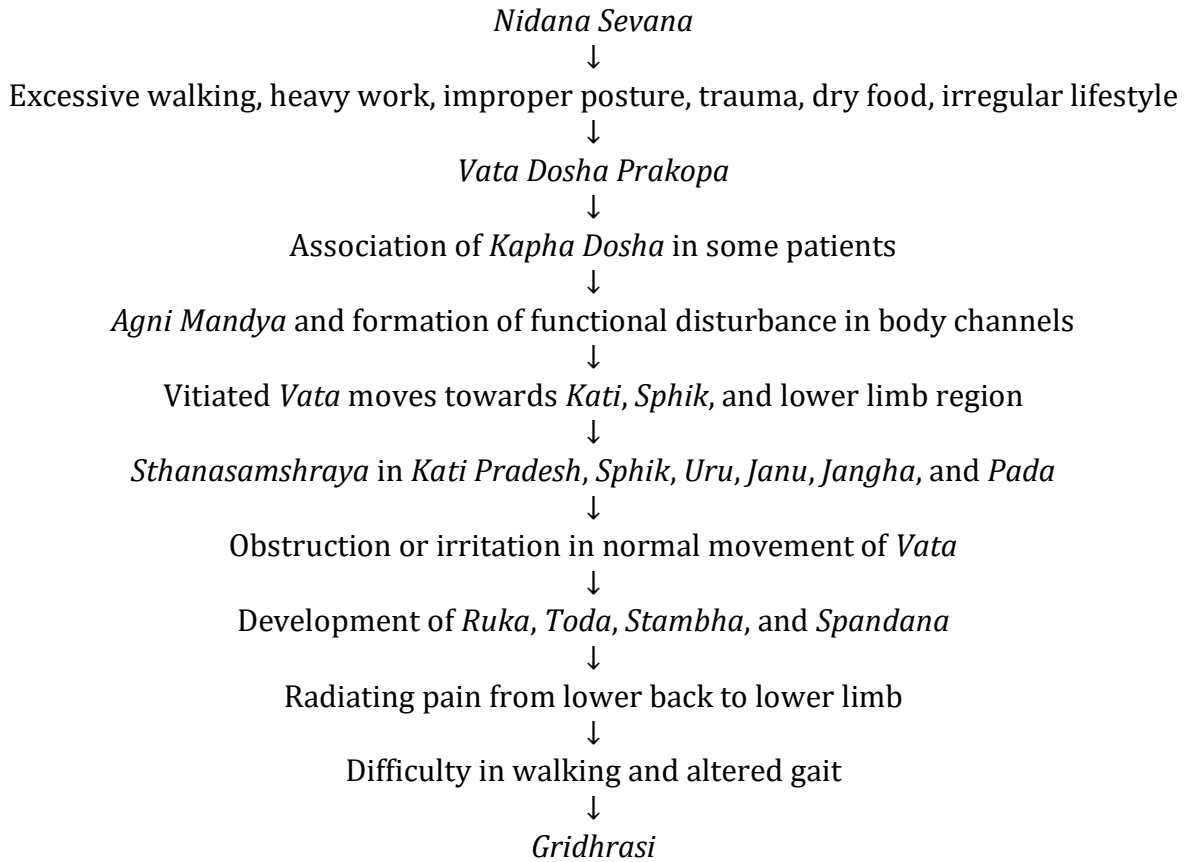
penetrates locally, relaxes muscles, reduces stiffness, improves circulation, and nourishes the affected region. In *Gridhrasi*, *Kati Basti* is useful where pain is associated with stiffness, restricted movement, dryness, and degenerative changes. It is especially beneficial in chronic low back pain, lumbar spondylosis, and sciatic pain conditions. The warm oil pacifies *Vata Dosha*, softens the tissues, relieves muscle spasm, and improves flexibility of the lumbosacral region.

### Flow Chart -2



**Samprapti of Disease**

**Flow Chart -3**



**Comparative View of Agnikarma and Kati Basti**

Point Comparison	of	<i>Agnikarma</i>	<i>Kati Basti</i>
Nature procedure	of	Para-surgical heat therapy	External oleation and sudation therapy
Main action		Pain relief through controlled heat	Pain and stiffness relief through warm medicated oil
Best suited condition		Sharp pain, localized tenderness, chronic pain points	Low back stiffness, muscular spasm, degenerative pain
Dominant action	<i>Dosha</i>	Pacifies <i>Vata</i> and <i>Kapha</i> by <i>Ushna Guna</i>	Pacifies <i>Vata</i> by <i>Snehana</i> and <i>Swedana</i>

Speed of relief	Comparatively faster in pain-dominant cases	Gradual and sustained relief
Area of application	Tender points or selected painful areas	Mainly lumbosacral region
Practical utility	Useful in localized pain points	Useful in broad lower back involvement
Patient comfort	Mild burning sensation may occur	Generally comfortable and relaxing
Repetition	Can be repeated as per condition	Usually performed in sittings for several days
Probable modern action	Counter-irritation, improved circulation, pain modulation	Muscle relaxation, improved circulation, reduced stiffness

### Findings of Study

- *Gridhrasi* can be clinically correlated with sciatica because both show radiating pain from lower back or buttock to lower limb.
- *Vata Dosha* plays the main role in the development of *Gridhrasi*.
- *Kapha Dosha* involvement produces stiffness, heaviness, and restricted movement.
- *Agnikarma* is more useful in pain-dominant and localized tender point conditions.
- *Kati Basti* is more useful in stiffness-dominant, chronic, and degenerative lower back conditions.
- *Agnikarma* may provide faster pain relief due to direct heat stimulation.
- *Kati Basti* provides soothing, lubricating, and relaxing effects over the lumbosacral region.
- Both procedures help in reducing *Ruka, Toda, Stambha*, and movement restriction.
- *Agnikarma* acts mainly by *Ushna Guna*, while *Kati Basti* acts through combined *Snehana* and *Swedana* effects.
- A combined or case-specific selection of both therapies may give better clinical results in *Gridhrasi*.

## Discussion

*Gridhrasi* is a pain-dominant *Vata Vyadhi* that affects the daily activities of the patient due to radiating pain, stiffness, restricted movement, and difficulty in walking. The clinical similarity between *Gridhrasi* and sciatica is clear because both conditions involve pain radiating from the lumbosacral or buttock region to the lower limb. In modern terms, this pain is commonly related to sciatic nerve irritation or nerve root compression.<sup>11</sup> In *Ayurvedic* understanding, the same presentation is explained through aggravated *Vata Dosha*, obstruction in the normal pathway of *Vata*, and involvement of *Kati*, *Sphik*, and lower limb structures.

*Agnikarma* is very useful where pain is sharp, localized, chronic, and resistant to ordinary treatment. Its heat effect helps in pacifying *Vata* and *Kapha*,<sup>12</sup> reducing stiffness and relieving pain. From a modern view, controlled heat may improve blood circulation, reduce local muscle spasm, stimulate pain inhibitory mechanisms, and act as counter-irritation therapy. Therefore, *Agnikarma* can be considered more suitable in patients having marked tenderness, severe radiating pain, and localized painful points.<sup>13</sup>

*Kati Basti* is nourishing in nature. It provides both oleation and sudation effect to the lumbosacral region. In chronic sciatica, lumbar spondylosis, muscular spasm, and stiffness-dominant conditions, *Kati Basti* can be highly useful. Warm medicated oil helps to relax muscles, soften tissues, reduce dryness, and improve flexibility. Compared with *Agnikarma*, it may act gradually but gives better comfort and sustained relaxation in many patients. Thus, both therapies have their own importance and selection should be based on patient condition, severity of pain, chronicity, stiffness, and tolerance.<sup>14</sup>

## Conclusion

*Gridhrasi* is a common painful disorder described in *Ayurveda* and can be correlated with sciatica on the basis of radiating pain, stiffness, restricted movement, and altered gait. *Agnikarma* and *Kati Basti* are both useful procedures in its management, but their mode of action and clinical suitability are different. *Agnikarma* is better for quick pain relief in localized and severe pain conditions, while *Kati Basti* is more useful in chronic low back stiffness, muscular spasm, and degenerative conditions. Both therapies pacify aggravated *Vata Dosha* and improve functional movement. A careful clinical assessment can help in selecting the better therapy or combining both for improved outcome in *Gridhrasi*.

**Conflict of Interest** -Nil.

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